

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner has objected to the language "using an individual criterion associated with the component". In reply to this rejection, claims 1 and 5 have been amended so as to require that the individual criterion is **a reference area determined in light of a position of a component to be mounted or a position of an already-mounted component**.

For example, according to the second embodiment (please see paragraph [0052]) "reference area 21 is predetermined in light of a position of neighboring, mounted component 12a", and according to the fourth embodiment (please see paragraph [0066]) "reference area 21a is determined from a size of a component 12 [to be mounted]".

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection has been addressed, and that the currently presented claims are in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wooster et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

In supporting the rejection of claims 1-5, the Examiner has concluded that it would have been obvious to use Wooster et al.'s method to determine if a component which is being held on a component holder would interfere with an electric component which is already mounted on a substrate. It is respectfully submitted that a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established because the Examiner has provided no evidence or reasoning to support this conclusion. This is especially true in light of the purpose of Wooster et al. as compared to the purpose of the instant invention. That is, the method of Wooster et al. is for reducing or minimizing inspection times for regions of interest of a product inspected by a viewing device having a constrained view, and for controlling a route of travel of the viewing device; however,

Wooster et al. is not concerned with determining whether there would be interference between a mounted component and a component to be mounted and/or a mounted component and a holder holding a component to be mounted.

Specifically, Wooster et al. discloses an apparatus for inspection of products and, in particular, automated visual inspection. The inspection apparatus includes a viewing device 25 which has a constrained image acquiring viewing area 26. As indicated in the modified Fig. 7 of Wooster et al. attached hereto, the constrained image acquiring viewing area is rectangular and regions of interest R_i are provided on product P. The constrained image acquiring viewing area is moved relative to the product P along a path indicated by a series of arrows to pick up images of the regions of interest R_i . The apparatus is programmed to determine the most effective path of the viewing area 26 along which all of the regions of interest R_i are picked up. The viewing area is a fixed-size viewing area of the viewing device 25, and its size is not determined depending upon an object being viewed (please see column 10, lines 42-44: "Each of the initial views V_i is sized corresponding to the actual size of the constrained viewing area 26 of the viewing device 25.").

Accordingly, though components mounted on a circuit board can be viewed in accordance with the teachings of Wooster et al., there is no indication that this viewing should somehow be used to determine whether a component that is not yet mounted, or a holder holding this component, would interfere with one of the already-mounted components were the not yet-mounted component attempted to be mounted onto the circuit board.

Thus, claims 1-5 are not obvious over Wooster et al.

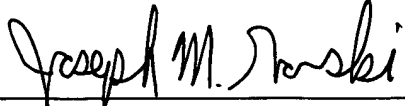
If the Examiner continues to reject the claims, then the Examiner is respectfully requested to specifically explain how the conclusion arrived at by the Examiner has been reached.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner believes that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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